



News Release

For Immediate Release:

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Or your local health department

Utah Loosens Flu Vaccine Restrictions

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) has loosened flu vaccine restrictions enabling adults 50-64 years of age and providers of essential community services, such as police officers, firefighters, EMTs and teachers to get the flu shot.

UDOH is expanding its recommendations to include these other traditional high-risk or priority groups who have not yet been eligible to get vaccinated this flu season. UDOH strongly encourages high-risk individuals in any of the priority groups to get vaccinated now, even if they feel healthy. After Thanksgiving, UDOH plans to remove these restrictions and make the remaining vaccine available for anybody who wants it.

Health officials have eased vaccine restrictions because most of the highest risk groups have had a chance to be vaccinated and more vaccine may be on the way. UDOH recently learned that partially filled vaccine orders in October may soon be completed making more flu shots available. UDOH wants to make sure that the available vaccine supply is used to protect as many people as possible and doesn't go unused.

The updated priority groups include:

- adults 50-64 years of age **(new)**
- providers of essential community services, such as police officers, firefighters, EMTs and teachers **(new)**
- caregivers of those with chronic illnesses, such as cancer or severely weakened immune systems
- children 6 months to 23 months of age
- adults 65 years of age and older
- persons 2 years to 64 years with chronic medical conditions
- all women who will be pregnant during influenza season
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- children 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin therapy
- health care workers providing direct patient care
- out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children less than 6 months of age.

Page 2 of 2 – Utah Loosens Flu Vaccine Restrictions

UDOH is grateful to all the health care providers and individuals who have helped make sure that the limited available vaccine gets to those who need it most.

For more information about influenza vaccinations, contact your health care provider, local health department, or the Immunization Hotline at 1-800-275-0659. Physicians wanting additional information on vaccine resources may contact the Utah Immunization Program at 801-538-9450.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.